

Mr Maltby presents a rather predictable account of the rapid growth of the telecommunications industry in the last few years and concludes with a section on the significance of telecommunications change for libraries and librarians but there is little that is new here and one can't help but imagine how much more engagingly the late Ralph Shaw would have handled the paper. The last paper on the mass media concentrates on the process of assimilating information and is presented in a more lively and memorable fashion.

The book's main value is as a series of discussion boosters on areas relevant to public library activity and the papers were probably good fare for the purpose the organisers had in mind and could even be used as a basis for branch or public library seminars but this collection does not provide stimulating reading for the individual. That the book was written for Australian conditions is most evident in the chapters on economics and physical planning, otherwise they are equally relevant to New Zealand conditions.

In the review copy pages 43 and 44 were reversed.

Michael Wooliscroft

Directory of special libraries

New Zealand Library Association. Special Libraries Section. *Directory of special libraries in New Zealand*. Wellington, New Zealand Library Association, 1974. 163 p. \$2.50 to members, \$3.50 to non-members, plus 50c for overseas orders.

This Directory has reached its third edition. It was first published in 1959 under the title *Special libraries and collections: a New Zealand directory*, which was revised and enlarged in 1968. The time interval between revisions has been reduced, but the number of inclusions has again risen significantly, from 167 in the second edition to 260 in the third. Among these are included 39 information centres—a category accepted for the first time.

In these circumstances, an elaboration rather than a simplification of the earlier descriptive title would, perhaps, have been more appropriate for this edition. The limitation implied by the title now adopted clashes too with the objective of the directory, which is given in the introduction as being "to provide a systematic reference tool for the best exploitation of New Zealand's information resources." This apparent ambivalence is natural in the face of an interesting diversity that includes relatively large general libraries whose main holdings are probably of greater overall utility in a local context than are their "special" collections within the national scene. However, titles do matter, even if introductions are intended to be read.

Individual entries are fuller in detail, yet clearer in layout than in the previous editions, while the coding of headings for repetitive items of information, combined with their relative unobtrusiveness in the italic face, is a welcome introduction. Similarly, the use of subordinate numbering for sub-libraries within a major institution is a useful feature not previously employed.

Indexing has been elaborated. Like its predecessors, this edition includes indexes of named special collections and of localities, the latter being now improved by the inclusion of the symbols of the individual libraries in

addition to the entry number which alone was given in the earlier editions. The subject index has been given a thesaurus structure that is more appropriate to the larger scale of this edition but which is, as the editor admits in his introduction, very dependent for its usefulness upon the sense of proportion of the contributing institutions. It would be invidious to quote several obvious examples of undue modesty on one hand and over-enthusiasm on the other.

There are three new types of index: a type-of-organisation index, the headings of which are partly subject (e.g. engineering) and partly functional (e.g. government departmental) in type; a personnel name index referring to persons in charge of libraries and information centres and of major divisions in some instances; and a subject index of degree and diploma courses taught at universities in New Zealand. It must be confessed that the provincial hackles of the reviewer rose at the discovery that only six teaching institutions had been taken into consideration in the last-mentioned index. This gives the impression, to take obvious examples, that agronomy is taught at only one New Zealand university institution, that hydrology is not taught at all in this country, and that the only two-year post-graduate course in Landscape Architecture established in Australasia does not exist.

These additional indexes are interesting examples of the art, but they do not appear to add greatly to the value of the directory as a whole. We owe a considerable debt to the editor and his committee for voluntarily undertaking and effectively completing an essential task. Yet within less than a decade it will require repeating. The inclusion of additional indexes that are of the nature of embellishments may make such revision an unnecessarily daunting task to their successors.

John A. Frampton

Continuing education and the public library

BROOKS, J. S. and REICH, D. L. *The public library in non-traditional education*. Homewood, Ill. E.T.C. Publications, 1974. \$US10.

What is a library? Indeed, what is a librarian? I suppose most non-librarians and a few librarians would say that a library is a place where books are stored and from time to time lent to users; and that a librarian is a person who stores the books, distributes them to the users and then tries to get them back. I admit that, although I have been an avid user of libraries from childhood, until lately my own picture of libraries and librarians did not go much beyond that, except that I was also aware that a librarian was a person who could usually be depended on to locate information which others were too lazy or ignorant to find for themselves. Lately I have been groping towards a more enlightened view of libraries. I have been wondering for instance whether our public and academic libraries in their present roles justify the large investment (which grows with frightening acceleration) which they need. The value of libraries is taken for granted, but I suspect that this is a sign of basic indifference rather than satisfaction. The value of libraries in schools is every now and then proclaimed, but they are being built and staffed (after a fashion) without there having been any really searching examination of their function, and they remain poorly integrated into the objectives and organisation of our education system.

I must admit that any skill I have acquired in the use of a library